A FUNERAL

SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

ENGLISH CHURCH

IN

ROTTERDAM,

March 4. 1759.

On Occaſion of the

DEATH

OF

Her Royal Highneſs the PRINCESS of ORANGE and NASSAU, and REGENT of the UNITED PROVINCES, *&c. &c.*

By BENJAMIN SOWDEN,
Miniſter of the ſaid Church.

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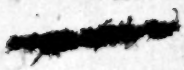

PROV. X. 7. former Part.

The memory of the juſt is bleſſed.

OF all the various principles of action implanted in human nature, perhaps the *love of fame* may be ranked amongſt the ſtrongeſt and moſt active. It is a flame originally kindled from heaven; and withal ſo ſtrong and ardent, that it can never be wholly extinguiſhed. What principle more univerſally common to mankind, of all ages and nations, and to the good and bad of each? ſmitten with the charms of an immortal reputation, many *real*, and many *falſe* Heroes have toiled in the arts of government, and fought, and bled, and periſhed in the field of battle. Animated with the ſanguine hopes of poſſeſſing this highly-rated jewel, the *Painter* has endeavoured to diſplay the various beauties of his creative pencil. The

Poet has laboured to clothe his ſentiments in all the elegance of poliſhed and harmonious numbers; the *Philoſopher* has worn himſelf away, by the fatigues of inceſſant ſtudy; while the truly wiſe and virtuous of every claſs of men, have in many inſtances, been animated by it to become wiſer and better. All it requires to anſwer this valuable end, is to be well regulated: but ſuch a regulation ought to be attempted with a judicious hand, leaſt by ſuppreſſing it too much, we ſhould deſtroy an excellent motive to virtue, and extinguiſh other noble fires of the human mind, which warm the heart of man to generous and uſeful actions.

Such a ſkilful regulation is moreover neceſſary, becauſe *this*, like our other principles of action, is very apt to fix upon wrong and hurtful objects of purſuit, and even to run into exceſs, where it has right ones. In the *latter* of theſe caſes, it ſinks from its native dignity, into that ridiculous foible, *vanity*; but in the *former* it is infinitely worſe, ſeeing it degenerates into a moſt deformed and pernicious vice. It is then transformed into a *luſt of fame*, an odious and cruel *dæmon*, that wherever it is joined with extenſive

ſive power, ſcatters injury, diſorder and ruin like a peſtilence, as far as ever it is able, and to which thoſe who, alas! are too often ſtiled *Heroes*, and as ſuch, admired by the publick eye, have ſacrificed millions of innocent human victims, upon the ſanguinary altars of *falſe honour*, but conſider it as an unadulterated principle, implanted by the gracious hand of our wiſe Creator, and if it is not *virtue itſelf*, it is, at leaſt, the generous *handmaid* of *virtue*, exciting to the moſt *laudable*, becauſe the moſt *beneficent* actions.

If it were neceſſary we might abundantly multiply proofs upon this head, both from a *philoſophical* and *hiſtorical* view of human nature. But we need not have recourſe to theſe remote ſources, ſince a noble and ſufficient evidence preſents itſelf in the divine oracles; in which the great God who knows our frame, in a manner peculiar to himſelf, and what ſprings are moſt proper to be touched, in order to excite us to a conduct he approves, addreſſes frequent exhortations by way of motive, to this very principle, *That the righteous ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance*, is frequently the encouraging language of the pious *Pſalmiſt*: and his ſon *Solomon*, in effect,

effect, often repeats it in other places, as well as in our text, that he may recommend it more forcibly to our attention.

Nor is this the language of the *law* only, but equally that of the *goſpel*. For as this principle is not peculiar to any particular diſpenſation of providence, but wrought into the human heart, and equally common to mankind at all times; ſo the ſcriptures of the *new teſtament*, conſidering us as rational creatures, do not attempt to root up any of our natural principles, but only to correct and regulate them: and for this purpoſe they apply to our natural *love of fame*, as one motive among others, to a truly religious conduct. Witneſs that fine and forcible addreſs of the apoſtle *Paul*, * *Finally brethren, whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are venerable, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are of* GOOD REPORT, *if there be any virtue, if there be any* PRAISE, think on theſe things.

There is a juſt and beautiful gradation of religious and moral conduct, marked out for us in the divine word. *An unequal love to*

* Phil. iv. 8.

to God, and a *ſupreme deſire of his approbation*, holds the firſt and principal place next to that, and in ſtrict connection with the love of our neighbour, comes *the love of ourſelves*; and, among the ſeveral ſubdiviſions into which this is branched out, *a deſire of reputation* among our fellow mortals, to be acquired by means of good and worthy actions. Take it in this view, as it *ought* to be, and as in a conſiderable meaſure, it really *is*, in every good man; and it is a principle free from any thing criminally ſelfiſh, yea, it wears a very reſpectable form, and is a moſt vigorous incentive to that divine temper and conduct, which God *now* requires of us, and will *hereafter* moſt liberally reward.

It is in this honourable connection, that *Solomon* takes it in our text, contraſting it with the vain hopes of the wicked, that by this, as the ſhade of a well-wrought picture, he may ſet off the juſt expectation of the righteous in a proper point of light, and give it all thoſe graceful heightenings which the excellence of its nature demands. Concerning *the name of the wicked*, he obſerves, it *ſhall rot*; thereby intimating, that though in ſome caſes, it may poſſibly ſurvive them, it is not by way of honour, but only to compleat

pleat their deſerved diſgrace, and, inſtead of regaling poſterity with any grateful incenſe, will be equally diſguſtful with any putrifying ſubſtance, that offends us with a moſt noiſome ſmell. Whenever perſons of this deteſtable character, fill either a *low*, or a *middle* ſtation, their memory is ſoon forgot, becauſe unworthy of any honourable notice. But if it happens (as, alas! it too often does,) that they move in an elevated ſphere, then it is continued indeed, but loaded with all the infamy it juſtly deſerves. For when men have no longer any thing to hope, from the favour of ſuch princes, or inferior magiſtrates, and nothing to fear from their power, they will declare their averſion without any reſerve, and even take pleaſure in publiſhing it. In proof of this obſervation, we need only have recourſe to impartial hiſtory, in which the memory of the impious and unjuſt among the great, is handed down to poſterity, in its true colours, and ſtigmatized with eternal diſgrace.

But with the *juſt*, when in high and honourable ſtations, it is far otherwiſe. Poſterity will do them more juſtice when they are dead, than, with all their diſtinguiſhing worth, they could obtain while living. Their

reputation

reputation ſhall not periſh, though their bodies do, but ſpring up with undecaying verdure, and bloſſom with immortal fragancy, from the receſſes of the tomb. All this is fairly implied, when it is ſaid, as in our text, that *the memory of the juſt is bleſſed*; words that are pregnant with very weighty and inſtructive ſenſe; and from whence, in dependance on the divine bleſſing, we will now endeavour,

I. To inſiſt a little on the character here exhibited.
II. To take notice of a few circumſtances implied concerning it, and
III. Of the reputation that ſurvives it.

Under our *Firſt* point, we will briefly conſider the character here exhibited.

The inſpired Penmen, often ſingle out one eminent and comprehenſive branch of virtue, under which to include the whole of a truly religious character. Thus *the fear of the Lord* is frequently uſed to denote the whole extenſive compaſs of piety and righteouſneſs; and the ſame honourable ideas are likewiſe often conveyed to us, under the general expreſſion of *loving* him. In like man-

ner, *juſtice* or *righteouſneſs*, becauſe a principal virtue in the character of a good man, is uſed in our text, and in many parallel paſſages, to denote all thoſe ſpeculative and practical regards he maintains towards God, and his fellow-creatures. In conformity to this reaſonable, and indeed *elegant* method, the whole character of *John* the *Baptiſt*, is repreſented under that of a *juſt man*.* So alſo is that of *Chriſt* himſelf, who, by way of eminence, is frequently ſtiled the *juſt*.† In ſhort, it is one of thoſe two general diviſions, under which all mankind are ranked, in a conciſe and ſummary way; as might be ſhown from various paſſages of the *New Teſtament*, as well as of the *Old*, if the time would permit, and it were neceſſary to cite them.

By the *juſt* then, when uſed in this comprehenſive ſenſe, (as it always is, when it ſtands by itſelf,) we are to underſtand all thoſe, who cordially believing the being and perfections of the ever adorable God, thankfully receive whatever intimations of his will he is pleaſed to give them, and make it their principal

* Mark vi. 20. † Zech. ix. 9. Matt. xxvii. 19, 24. 1 Pet. iii. 18.

principal concern to reduce them to practice, in the diligent exerciſe of univerſal righteouſneſs, as it reſpects him in the *firſt* place; the government of their own hearts in the *ſecond*; and their prevailing temper and conduct, towards all their fellow-creatures, in the *third*. Thus all thoſe eminently good men, who lived either under the *Patriarchial*, or under the *Jewiſh* diſpenſation, as they thankfully embraced, and conſcientiouſly reduced to practice, thoſe degrees of religious light, with which they were reſpectively favoured, had *their faith accounted to them for righteouſneſs*, and according to the condeſcending language of ſcripture, are ſtiled *juſt*, or *righteous* men, notwithſtanding their many imperfections, becauſe ſincere in their profeſſions, and good upon the whole.

But whenever this valuable character is applied to thoſe, who have the honour to enjoy the diſcoveries and priviledges of the goſpel, it muſt be taken in a ſenſe equally extenſive, with that ſuperior light and obligation the goſpel manifeſts. In this view, it denotes that genuine *faith in Chriſt*, which receives, and relies upon him, as the Saviour of his people, according to the terms of the new covenant; that *faith* which is con-

nected with unfeigned repentance, and by which *juſtification* is obtained from God, whereby they are pardoned, and treated as if conſummately righteous, through the perfect righteouſneſs of his well-beloved Son, and become intereſted in all his promiſes. It denotes *faith*, as it is a vital and ſaving principle, as it purifies and exalts the heart, and works by love towards God and man; that *faith* which, in oppoſition to ſenſe and paſſion, opens up the proſpect of eternal objects to the view of the ſoul, which brings them near, makes them, as it were preſent, and gives them an infinite importance in all its eſtimations. In a word, it is that elevated and ſublime principle, which is widely different from a mere *ſpeculative aſſent* of the mind, though founded upon it, and which influences thoſe, who are poſſeſſed of it, to live mindful of the dignity of their Chriſtian vocation, and the grandeur of their immortal hopes, diſpoſing them *to deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent world.*

Such is the comprehenſive character of the *juſt*, according to the idea of it, ſuggeſted by the New Teſtament. And is it not, do you think, an amiable one? How can it be otherwiſe,

otherwiſe, when it is compoſed of every lovely and deſirable ingredient? Is there a beauty deſerving our admiration in a fine ſtatue, or an exquiſite picture, reſulting from the exact proportion of the ſeveral parts to each other, and their harmony in a perfect whole? And is there not a like, yea a ſuperior beauty, becauſe a moral one; in ſuch a character as this, in proportion as any chriſtian profeſſor comes up to it? Let him be placed even in the loweſt ſtation of life, if his temper and deportment be ſuch as we have now repreſented; there is a nameleſs charm in it, which *pride* and *impiety* cannot always overlook, which *candor* and *honeſty*, love to obſerve and encourage, and which even poverty and rags cannot wholly obſcure.

But how much more amiable is ſuch a character, whenever thoſe to whom it in any good meaſure agrees, are placed by providence, in ſome of the higher and more dignified elevations of life. Then it ſhines out with an illuſtrious radiance indeed, while the many difficulties it has to contend with, contribute to exalt its ſplendor. And though the tainted breath of *ſelf-intereſt*, and the equally malignant one of *faction*, may labour to involve it in clouds of their own raiſing, and

may

may ſometimes be ſucceſsful in their baſe attempts, yet their triumph is but ſhort-lived, for ſooner or later, it breaks out with redoubled brightneſs, as the ſun does from behind a dark cloud, or after it has been hidden from us a while by the obſcurity of ſome ſtinking fog. To every one who has a true taſte for virtue, ſuch a character, in ſuch a ſtation, cannot but be amiable, becauſe made up of every grace, whether of a *divine*, or a *ſocial* claſs, and that in a juſt ſubordination. And though, there may be ſome deficiencies in it, (for, alas! what is perfect that is human,) yet every judicious and candid obſerver, will be ready to excuſe theſe, as an accompliſhed critic does a good author, for the ſake of its innumerable beauties; as alſo from a conſideration of the many difficulties it has to ſtruggle with, and the temptations, to which, in high life, it is perpetually expoſed.

In ſuch a ſphere, where, alas! comparatively ſpeaking, it is ſo ſeldom to be ſeen, the character we are conſidering, will not only appear amiable by reaſon of its inherent worth, but alſo, becauſe *there* it will be moſt extenſively *uſeful*. Then, like the grand luminary of heaven in its daily career, it is to be

be admired for its delightful *effects*, as well as for the beauty of its luſtre. For ſuch excellent perſons, are not only happy inſtruments in the hand of providence, to ſcatter publick bleſſings on the community to which they belong, but they alſo excite others to a like beneficent conduct, by the powerful influence of a worthy example.

And now, my brethren, who that delights in the welfare of mankind, would not, in the tranſports of an overflowing benevolence, be ready to wiſh, that ſuch eminent ſtations of life, might always be filled with ſuch characters? or, at leaſt, when ſuch auguſt characters appear to fill and dignify ſuch ſtations, that they might be continued beyond a common date? But, alas! the imperfection of human nature, as expoſed to the dangerous temptations of power and grandeur fruſtate the *former* of theſe hopes, while the fixed and irreverſible doom of mortality entirely blaſts the *latter*, and therefore forbids it. This we ſhall ſee more fully under our

Second Head of diſcourſe, where we ſhall take notice of ſome circumſtances, implied in the text concerning them.

The

The firſt is. That they die as well as others. This is evidently ſuggeſted by the term *memory*, which implies ſomething that ſurvive them, and of conſequence their removal by death. *Piety*, that ſhield of celeſtial temper, which can blunt and repel the ſharpeſt arrows of affliction, cannot poſſibly defend from the ſhafts of death. Do we want a determinate proof of this?—go view the tombs of thoſe, who were once as eminent for piety and true worth, as for external grandeur; and even the graves of the more obſcure among the *juſt*. Or do but caſt your eye over the long annals of time, and ſee what is become of all the great and excellent of paſt ages, down to the preſent. Could exemplary virtue have ſecured an immortality upon earth, they would at this inſtant have been inhabitants of our world. Or could it have ſecured life, till that period which is generally reckoned the full date of human exiſtence here, we ſhould not now be regretting the loſs of that *worthy and excellent Princeſs*, to whoſe memory, with a view to our edification, I conſecrate the preſent diſcourſe, and to whom a particular reference has been intended in every thing hitherto advanced, under this, and the foregoing head.

Is

Is a ſerious and plaintive *curioſity* ready to demand, "why are ſuch excellent perſons "taken away, in the midſt of their lives, "and their uſefulneſs?" the anſwer is plain. It is becauſe they muſt ſubmit to the irreverſible ſentence of mortality, equally with the *unjuſt*. But then let it be remembered, there is this very material difference between them, that while death is inflicted as a puniſhment upon the *wicked*, its penal nature and conſequences are reverſed, by the grace of God in Chriſt, with reſpect to the *righteous*, and is their nobleſt bleſſing, though in diſguiſe. They are then called home by their heavenly father, to be relieved from all thoſe pains and ſorrows, either of body or mind, with which they might be exerciſed here, whether by the hand of God or man. Or in the language of ſcripture, that they may *reſt from their labours*.—Or if the ſins of a nation in which they live, are riſen to ſuch an enormous pitch, as to render it proper for the divine being to puniſh them, then he frequently removes ſome of the moſt eminent among his ſervants, in mercy to themſelves, that he may hide them in the grave *from the evil to come*.*—He alſo takes them away, to give room for the ſervices of others;

* Iſa. lvii. 1.

that when they make their exit, and retire from the grand ſtage of human life, *others*, ſuch as he in the wiſdom of his providence ſhall appoint, may appear upon it to fill up their places, either to continue and compleat the work they left imperfect, or to enter upon new ſcenes of action.—And finally my brethren, God removes ſuch eminent inſtruments as her late *Royal Highneſs*, to place them in a ſphere of nobler ſervice and enjoyment. Though the work in which he employs them here, is highly honourable in itſelf, and ſuch as, when ſucceſsful, is, in the eſtimate of a generous mind, its own reward, yet providence has ſomething further for them in reſerve, to which all the moſt exalted honours they could receive on this ſide the grave, bear no manner of proportion, either in point of ſatisfaction, dignity, or duration. He has reſerved for them *an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled*, and will honour them with an immortal diadem. In a word, their ſtate of action and enjoyment in that bleſſed world, ſhall be equally honourable with that of angels, their faculties in all reſpects adapted to its nature, and their happineſs ſublime, ſatisfying, perfect, adequate to the boundleſs deſires of their ſouls, and to the demands of an eternal exiſtence.

It

It is to theſe conſiderations, and eſpecially the laſt of them, that we muſt have recourſe, when any of our valuable and pious relatives are removed from us, by the ſtroke of death. When in ſuch mournful circumſtances, inſenſibility would ſurely be a crime; we cannot but feel our loſs; and in proportion to our regard for them, will the painfulneſs of thoſe feelings be. Whenever this falls to our lot (and it muſt fall to our lot ſometime or other, if we are permitted to ſurvive our friends) from whence are we to derive ſuitable conſolation? Will philoſophy yield it? that is not likely. For we may ſay of its boaſted aids, *miſerable comforters are ye all*, ſince reaſon and perſuaſion furniſh no cure for ſorrow. It is no relief to be told, "that death is natural and unavoidable, a "law we muſt all ſubmit to, ſooner or later, "whether we will or no:" for that it is thus inevitable, is one principle ſource of our complaint.—Tell me not, "that their me-"mories ſhall flouriſh to remoteſt poſterity." For though this be an advantage to thoſe whom they have left behind, and may adminiſter no ſmall pleaſure to their deareſt friends and well-wiſhers; yet unleſs we have ſome well-founded comfortable perſua-

ſion, that they have a *real*, *ſenſible*, and *happy* exiſtence, we cannot obtain a conſolation, adequate to the anguiſh ariſing from our loſs. It is only from ſuch a hope of their glory and happineſs after death, that we can derive a lenitive ſufficient to aſſuage the violent pangs, that wring our hearts upon their being torn from us, to ſooth our ſorrows by juſt degrees, and to brighten them into reſignation and complacency, under ſuch afflictive determinations of providence.

"It is from hence, O afflicted Monarch "of *Great Britain*, that you muſt derive "comfort under this heavy ſtroke of provi- "dence,—heavy indeed in itſelf; but much "more ſo, as it is a painful addition to ma- "ny afflictions of a like nature; what makes "former wounds ſmart and bleed afreſh, "while it infixes a new and deep one. Wor- "thieſt and beſt of Princes! juſtly eſteemed "and loved by a happy and grateful people, "it is from the comfortable hope of the glo- "ry and felicity, of this your dear and de- "ceaſed relative, that you muſt now acquire "that reſignation and complacency to the "will of God, which will effectually ſupport "the mourning *Parent*, while it adds luſtre "and dignity to the *King*.

"It

" It is from hence too, O afflicted Prin-
" ceſs,* doubly venerable with years and vir-
" tue, that you muſt derive your conſolation
" under this loſs of a juſtly-beloved daugh-
" ter, added to the late removal of a moſt
" deſervedly dear and valuable ſon. God has
" diſtinguiſhed you by ſevere afflictions as
" much as by external dignity. He has alſo
" enabled you to diſtinguiſh yourſelf, in a
" very honourable manner, by that uncom-
" mon reſignation and fortitude, you have
" exerted under your trials. Now he is cal-
" ling you to a freſh exerciſe of theſe chri-
" ſtian graces, may he make you equal to
" the duty, and render this *laſt* in connecti-
" on with your other tribulations, conducive
" to your fitneſs for heaven, and for a more
" exceeding weight of glory, whenever you
" arrive there.

" And O ye lovely ſurviving branches of
" your renowned ſtock, lately deprived of a
" valuable *Father*, and now called to mourn
" the removal of an equally valuable *Mother*.
" —Dear delightful orphans!—we love you
" for thoſe blooming hopes of future uſeful-
" neſs you afford us.—We love you too for
" the ſake of your illuſtrious houſe.—There
" is

* The Princeſs Dowager of *Orange*.

" is muſick in the name of ORANGE,
" to the ear of every *Briton*, who knows
" how to prize thoſe civil and religious li-
" berties, which your glorious anceſtors un-
" der God, have been inſtrumental in vindi-
" cating, reſtoring, and preſerving. And ſure-
" ly it ought to be equally dear to all, who
" value theſe bleſſings in this country, ſince
" it is owing to them, under providence, that
" we ever acquired, or that we now enjoy
" them.—Hopeful offspring, of a family,
" whoſe race has been but ſparingly dealt out
" to the world, though hitherto wonderfully
" preſerved! we ſympathize with you, we
" feel for you, and we cordially recommend
" you to that powerful and good God, who
" has graciouſly promiſed to be a *father to the*
" *fatherleſs*. May he ſhelter you under the
" wing of his indulgent providence, and in
" his due time, render you in your reſpec-
" tive ſtations, the guardian angels of the
" welfare, the glory, and happineſs of this
" republick, and in ſome good meaſure, of
" the whole proteſtant world. Tread in the
" ſteps of your illuſtrious anceſtors, particu-
" larly in thoſe of your late worthy parents.
" May you attain to a pitch of eminence, if
" poſſible, more exalted than any of your

" glorious

" glorious race have yet done, and after hav-
" ing been honourably uſeful like them, may
" you in God's due time, be compleatly happy
" with them, in the future and eternal ſtate."

The death of her late *Royal Highneſs* is a freſh and melancholy proof added to the long liſt of mortality, that the *juſt* fall by death as well as others. This is one thing implied concerning all of this character in the text, and ſuggeſted by the mention of their *memory*. We have ſeen however, by way of conſolation, under this head, that God takes them away from this life for many wiſe and gracious reaſons, and eſpecially that he may dignify and reward them, in a *manner* and *degree* equal to the love he bears them.

Another thing implied in the text concerning them is, Secondly, that ſometimes while living, their worth is not fully known, or when known, is too often ill rewarded. Even thoſe who enjoy the happy effects of their virtues, and on that account, are greatly indebted to them, too often endeavour to withhold, or to blaſt that praiſe which is their juſt due. *Malice* and *detraction* are the pernicious vermin that delight to prey upon the bloſſom of their fame, and that often injure it before it is well blown. Or if, notwithſtanding

ſtanding theſe malignant endeavours, it ſhoots up and thrives, then they labour to deface its beauty, and pervert its good effects, as much as poſſible. This has been the caſe of good and great men in all ages. They have frequently cloſed their race of glory with a ſigh,* in the painful experience of that ingratitude of mankind, which depreciated their beſt actions, and aggravated their infirmities into crimes; that not only refuſed to enjoy the fruit of their generous deſigns *themſelves*, but laboured as much as poſſible to prevent that enjoyment in others. Certain it is, and eſpecially ſo in the moſt elevated ſtations, that *malice*, *ingratitude*, and *envy* § purſue exalted merit, as a ſhadow does it ſubſtance, and equally certain, that in the end, they deſtroy their own attempts, becauſe like the ſhadow, they prove the ſubſtance true. For a while perhaps, they may be able to miſrepreſent great and worthy perſons, and bring them down to their own dirty level, but cannot maintain their ſordid dominion long. How often have we ſeen, that when the ſun has

* Clos'd their long glories with a ſigh, to find
The unwilling gratitude of baſe mankind!
Pope.

§ Envy will merit, as its ſhade, purſue;
But like a ſhadow, proves the ſubſtance true.
Ibid.

has been clouded, and totally obſcured, through the whole of a dark and rainy day. It breaks out in all its luſtre juſt before it ſets, and as it ſinks beneath the Horizon, leaves a long train of radiancy behind it, that illuminates the Hemiſphere it is leaving. Thus the merit of great and worthy perſons often blazes out with irreſiſtable ſplendor, through the thickeſt clouds of malice and detraction, juſt before they leave the world. They alſo ſet like the ſun, to riſe again with additional glory, while abuſed ſurvivors often learn their worth too late, and are left to lament its loſs, when they had but juſt began to know and prize it. I enter into no detail of application here, to the caſe of the deceaſed *Princeſs*. But this however, I will preſume to ſay, that as ſhe, no doubt, like other good perſons of her rank, had many little ſordid detractors, their low ungenerous arts will fail of their end; her worth will be learnt by her loſs, and her memory will be remembered with honour by poſterity, when that of her inveterate enemies, will be as rotten as their carcaſes, and either as entirely buried in oblivion, or remembered with averſion and diſguſt.

Having thus ſeen what is *implied* in our text concerning the juſt, we come now to

conſider ſomething of a more agreeable nature fully *expreſſed*, for we are now to obſerve,

Thirdly. That their memory is bleſſed.

So it ſtands in our tranſlation, but the ſeptuagint verſion, gives it a turn more agreeable to the genius of the original, and renders it thus; *The memory of the juſt is with encomiums* or *praiſes*. Thus it always is after their deaths, how much ſoever they might be loaded with unjuſt reproach while they were living. For their intimate friends, who knew them beſt, and for that good reaſon loved them moſt, will labour to embalm their memories, with well-deſerved and grateful praiſe. Nay, even their enemies often relent, and join to offer thoſe encomiums, they once invidiouſly laboured to ſuppreſs, or to leſſen. Often is that fine obſervation of *Horace* * verified concerning them, *viz.* "that "men hate the virtue they eſteem, when it "is before their eyes, and yet thoſe very per-"ſons ſhall praiſe and lament it when it is "taken away." The reaſon is, (as a worthy and

* Virtutem incolumem odimus
Sublatam ex oculis quærimus invidi.

and ingenious author † obſerves,) "that "*envy* which would not ſuffer them to do "juſtice to ſuperior merit, dies together with, "or not long after the object of it. *Envy* "then turns into love and veneration §. "Death ſtamps a kind of ſacred character "upon deceaſed virtue, and draws a veil "over any little blemiſhes that might for-"merly be mixed with it, and diminiſh the "price of it; much as in a noble ſtatue, or "fine piece of painting, in which the juſt-"eſt rules of proportion are obſerved, all "thoſe roughneſſes and inequalities that diſ-"pleaſed the eye, when it was viewed too "near, vaniſh at once as ſoon as it is placed "at a proper diſtance. Perſons that have "any taſte and value for true goodneſs are "willing to forget thoſe imperfections of "good men, dead and gone out of this "world, which were very much overba-"lanced by their commendable qualities, and "uſeful actions."

But this is not all. For *hiſtory*, conducted by *truth*, ſhall adorn and perpetuate their memories through the diſtant ages of remote poſterity, long after the marble buſt, and the

† Mr. *Grove*.

§——Extinctus amabitur idem. *Hor*.

ſepulchral column have proved faithleſs to their truſt, and are mouldered into ruins. Thus they ſhall live in the immortal records of hiſtorick fame, while men read their characters with delight, and wonder, perhaps, at the ſtupidity and perverſeneſs of their cotemporary enemies, that either hindred them from diſcerning ſuch conſpicuous merit, or prevented their treating it with due reſpect, while known.

Thus is the memory of the *juſt* bleſſed, and though it can be no *immediate* advantage to them, becauſe in all probability they are utterly inſenſible of it, yet it is of great uſe to poſterity; for which reaſon we may preſume, God will graciouſly place it to their account, and reward them for it, with a more exalted degree of glory in the heavenly world.

And now, my brethren, may we not preſume to aſſert, without any juſt imputation of flattery, that her late *Royal Highneſs, the Princeſs of Orange*, will be added to the hiſtorical liſt of thoſe worthy and illuſtrious perſons, whoſe names will be handed down with honour to poſterity, and whoſe memories will be bleſſed.—But here, methinks, the ear of *cenſure* is peculiarly wakeful, and

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the tongue of ill-natured *criticiſm*, almoſt ready to interrupt me, and to aſk, "why I "pretend to aſſert any thing, concerning the "character of her *Royal Highneſs*, with whom "I had no perſonal acquaintance."—It is true, I had not; my ſtation in life being much too humble and obſcure to enjoy that honour.—But though not qualified either in this reſpect, or in point of ſkill, to draw her character at full length; the kindneſs of ſome friends who did know her, has in ſome meaſure ſupplied thoſe defects, and enabled me to give you ſome ſketches of it in miniature, that may ſafely be regarded as genuine. This is as much as moſt hiſtorians can alledge, to vindicate their delineating many characters they have occaſion to introduce to their readers, and is therefore abundantly ſufficient, in the preſent caſe, to juſtify me.

I omit enlarging on the illuſtrious deſcent of her *Royal Highneſs*, and her education under one of the wiſeſt and beſt of mothers, becauſe theſe are only extraordinary felicities of life. Nevertheleſs, it redounds greatly to her honour, that ſhe knew how to prize and improve theſe advantages; eſpecially as it is a point in which the generality of Princes

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are ſo apt to fail, when they have the rare happineſs of being bleſſed with them. I likewiſe paſs over her happy talent of tempering high dignity, with the utmoſt affability and condeſcenſion, together with her conſummate ſkill in the fine arts of painting and muſick; becauſe theſe are only the accidental and graceful *ornaments*, not the *eſſentials* of a virtuous character. She needs not the tongue of oratory to ſound her worth, how much ſoever ſhe may deſerve it; and the *leſs* becauſe ſhe does deſerve it. Her fame will be ſufficiently honourable and perpetual, though we only *give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praiſe her in the gates* *; for they will ſpeak with a more delightful and convincing eloquence, than that of the moſt elegant and pompous funeral oration, though compoſed and delivered by the moſt accompliſhed and perfect orator.

It may ſafely be ſaid, that exalted as her ſtation was, ſhe conferred more honour upon it, than ever ſhe received from it. For to begin (where all real worth does begin, and is properly founded,) with her regards to the ever adoreable God, we may juſtly affirm

* Prov. xxxi. 31.

firm, that ſhe *truly feared him*, it being certain, that ſhe diligently peruſed his holy word, and maintained a daily communion with him in the devotional duties of the cloſet, where in regularity and fervor ſhe excelled many chriſtians, and was excelled by none; nor was ſhe leſs careful to attend the publick ordinances of religion whenever her health would permit. It was from theſe exerciſes of private and public devotion, ſhe derived that firmneſs and vigour of mind, which carried her through the moſt difficult tranſactions of her high ſtation, with uncommon addreſs and diſpatch. Her piety roſe to a very elevated pitch, though it carefully declined all oſtentation. It was entirely free from the adulterations of ſuperſtition, and founded on the nobleſt principles. It was enlightened by a clear and comprehenſive knowledge of divine truths, maintained by a conſtant ſeries of worthy actions, guided by diſcretion, and accompanied with that benignity and ſweetneſs of temper, which renders religion doubly amiable. In the judgement of all who knew her, ſhe was eminent for the practice of that eſſential and difficult duty of the chriſtian life, *reſignation* to the divine will. It was this ſupported her

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under the heavy loſs of one of the beſt of huſbands, and enabled her to improve that melancholy diſpenſation aright. She had frequent occaſions for exerting it, amidſt the innumerable difficulties of a moſt critical ſituation; and eſpecially in her laſt interview with her dear and amiable children. If in this inſtance it had failed her a little, all worthy parents would have readily excuſed her; for all ſuch can much better conceive, what a trying circumſtance that is, than it is poſſible for any one to deſcribe; yet here it ſhone out moſt illuſtriouſly. She viewed them with a noble firmneſs of mind, equally remote from apathy on the one hand, as from an injudicious fondneſs on the other; and gave them her dying advice with a ſtriking ſolemnity, attempered and ſweetened with parental tenderneſs, without any of its weakneſs; ſhe then cordially recommended them to the protection and bleſſing of the God of their fathers, to whoſe infinite mercy, through Chriſt, ſhe alſo yielded up herſelf; and, in the humble hope of his ſalvation, breathed out a willing ſpirit into the hands of her redeemer.

Like her excellent and royal mother, while a *zealous*, ſhe was a *generous* proteſtant, a great friend to religious liberty, and took

pleaſure

pleaſure in every thing that tended to ſupport it. Of *luxury* and outward *ſplendor*, ſhe had the utmoſt contempt; ſhe *ſubmitted* to them, rather than *enjoyed* them, which denotes a magnificence of mind, not very common, perhaps, among perſons of high rank. Her natural capacity was prodigious, her ſpirit unweariedly active, and being utterly averſe to indolence and diſſipation, ſhe filled up every portion of her time, with its proper ſhare of employment. She had acquired the happy art of governing her paſſions, to an uncommon degree; it was a high provocation indeed, that could make her angry, but the greateſt could not excite her to revenge. Her beneficence and charity to the poor were moſt extenſive, and from a ſenſe of duty, as well as from the impulſe of natural inclination, ſhe was indeed a chearful giver. Her knowledge in affairs of ſtate, was deep and comprehenſive, and attended with a ſurprizing preſence of mind, that never failed her. She had the true intereſt and proſperity of this republick much at heart; ſhe laboured inceſſantly to promote it, and it was the greateſt burden of her life, that ſhe had not a ſucceſs equal to her wiſhes, and her pains.

In a word, ſhe was a dutiful child to her royal and illuſtrious parents, a very affectionate wife to a moſt deſerving huſband, and in her ſtation of REGENT, ſkilful, prudent, and faithful. Worn out with the fatigue of her various and painful duties, her mortal part is now ſunk into the grave; and her ſoul lodged in the faithful hand of her Redeemer, awaiting the reſurrection of the juſt. In the mean time, her memory is far above the reach of death, and ſhall flouriſh with multiplied bleſſings from applauding poſterity. Of this we have already a promiſing earneſt, in the encomiums of that compleat judge of merit, *the King of Pruſſia*, who, in his letter of condolance to their *High Mightineſſes*, after mentioning ſome of her moſt diſtinguiſhing excellencies, ſtiles her *the Ornament of her Sex*. The praiſe of that moſt illuſtrious Prince is *fame* indeed! is a noble ſtamp to authenticate her high worth, and as much to her honour, as though ſhe had lived in the earlier ages of the world, and been made the ſubject of an epic poem, by the moſt celebrated poet of antiquity.

Since God has thought fit to remove her in the midſt of her days and her uſefulneſs, let us be thankful that he has yet left us, her

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two amiable and hopeful children, and pray that they may be ſpared, and compleatly qualified for great and laſting ſervice to this republick, eſpecially the *young Prince our Stadtholder*. And as *the memory of the juſt is bleſſed*, let us each be concerned in our reſpective ſtations, to ſecure a good character, by a truly virtuous and religious courſe of action; for this will truly *deſerve*, and be moſt likely to *enſure* it. It is much better to be forgot than to have an ill fame, or even a *good one* that is not thus founded. We have ſeen in our introduction to this diſcourſe, that we may lawfully ſeek the praiſe of men; but let it be remembered here, that we can never ſeek it ſo, but when we purſue it in ſubſerviency to the applauſe of God. It becomes us to be very careful, that we do not place it in competition with that; for if we do, our labour will be worſe than vain.

And finally, my brethren, if we would hope to be well ſpoken of by the worthy and excellent among our fellow-creatures, after we are dead and gone, and to be honoured with the applauſe of our judge, before the aſſembled world of men and angels, let us remember the obligations of our chriſtian vocation, be concerned to walk uprightly, both

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with God and man, and to ſet worthy examples to all around us, in our day and place, that when we are taken away, thoſe whom we leave behind, may have reaſon to thank God we have lived; yea, that we ourſelves may have reaſon to thank him, that we have not *received his grace in vain.* If this be our prevailing temper and conduct, we ſhall not have received it in vain: for our *path, being that of the juſt,** *like the* advancing *light of the morning,* ſhall *ſhine* brighter and brighter, till it terminates in the inconceivable glories of a *perfect* and everlaſting *day.* Amen.

* Prov. iv. 18.

FINIS.